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NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending
13 October 1948

Vol. III No. 40

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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GREECE

The Greek refugee problem resulting from the guerrillas' campaign of terrorism is having grave economic repercussions in Greece. It was believed that, following the Greek Army's summer operations, improved security conditions would permit most of the refugees to return to their homes. On the contrary, the number has grown from 600,000 to 700,000, representing about one out of every ten people in Greece. The necessity of providing for the refugees costs the Greek Government and the European recovery program some \$5.5 million each month. Moreover, the enforced idleness of the refugees represents a large indirect loss to the Greek economy. Plans to use the displaced persons on reconstruction projects have proved abortive; the idle men are so despondent and so fearful of guerrilla reprisals that few will accept jobs. For one European recovery project, only 150 out of 11,000 able-bodied men responded to recruitment; on a US military job, all the workers resigned following a guerrilla raid on their town. Many of the men who are removed from the public relief rolls for their failure to work will undoubtedly join the guerrilla ranks. Such situations will continue so long as the Greek Army is unable to clear guerrilla areas or even to provide adequate security for individual reconstruction projects.

TURKEY

The recent Turkish military maneuvers are expected to provide useful information on Turkey's armed forces. The exercises were designed to test Turkey's defenses--ground, sea, and air--against an attack from the Black Sea directed principally against the Asiatic mainland south of the Bosphorus Straits. Detailed reports should indicate to what extent the Turkish forces have been improved by the acquisition of US material and, more important, the results achieved so far by US training in the use of new weapons, in modernized methods of warfare, and in improved techniques of organization and administration. Deliveries of materiel already scheduled are far from complete, and the training programs must be continued for several years before really significant improvements are revealed. The maneuvers may therefore prove disappointing as a demonstration of modern armed forces in defensive action.

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However, the very weaknesses which are disclosed--in supply, maintenance, and leadership, for example--will provide a valuable basis for future action by the Turkish General Staff, acting under the advice of the US Military Mission.

PALESTINE

The forgotten man in Palestine last spring, when the armies of the Arab states crossed its boundaries, was Haj Amin Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Disliked and distrusted by the other Arab leaders and possessing no army of his own, the Mufti was obliged to remain in the background throughout the summer, patiently waiting for the right moment to make a new bid for power.

That moment appeared to come with the proclamation of the Palestine Arab Government (PAG) at a time when the Arab armies were defeated and the political situation in Palestine confused. Cognizant of his acceptance by many Palestinian Arabs as their leader and, indeed, as a symbol of resistance to the Jews, the Mufti suddenly emerged from hiding in Egypt, chartered a plane to Gaza, and, on 29 September, was unanimously elected president of PAG's National Assembly. It is still too early to determine whether he thus threw his turban into the ring prematurely.

Despite his wide reputation as the champion of the Palestine Arabs, the Mufti will meet opposition from several directions. In view of his wartime association with the Nazis, he must reckon with whatever influence the Western powers can marshal against him. Among the Palestinian Arabs themselves, a group which may even rival the pro-Mufti contingent in size is sympathetic toward Abdullah's idea of a Greater Transjordan and is prepared to give him its backing.

The most serious opposition, however, will probably come from the Arab states. Abdullah will naturally oppose the Mufti as representing the chief local barrier to incorporation of Arab Palestine into Transjordan. The other Arab League states, although they oppose Abdullah's ambitions, are anti-Mufti as well, however, because of the unsavory and unpredictable quality he lends the government they sponsored. Egypt in particular is concerned about the Mufti's influence in PAG. Although the Egyptians have now formally recognized PAG, the Mufti suddenly returned to Cairo on 7 October, reportedly under pressure from King Farouk, to whom the Mufti had promised, when he was granted sanctuary in Egypt, that he would refrain from political activity. Egypt's prime

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minister, meanwhile, is said to hope that PAQ, while providing the Arabs additional time to reconcile themselves to Israel's existence, will eventually wither on the vine, allowing Transjordan (and perhaps Egypt) quietly to annex the Arab sections of Palestine.

ARAB STATES

Soviet utterances on the Palestine issue will belabor US-UK "imperialists" while expressing continued support for the 29 November partition resolution, if a tract being surreptitiously circulated by Arab Communists in Damascus is taken as authoritative. Although the manifesto risks Arab opposition by implying continued Soviet support of Israel, its writers evidently hope to secure a counterbalancing effect by appealing to Arab bitterness against the Western powers and public disillusionment over Arab military failures. The tract attempts to explain the disastrous Palestine war as a result of machinations by the US and UK. In condemning the Bernadotte plan, the document lays special emphasis on its provisions for handing Arab Palestine over to "Britain's colony, Transjordan," instead of allowing the Palestinian Arabs to have their own government.

The manifesto is of further significance in that it was jointly issued by the Communist parties of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Arab Palestine, which have seldom hitherto acted in concert, and was echoed by intensified attacks on US and British oil interests in the USSR's Arab language propaganda broadcasts. These signs may indicate that the USSR not only considers the time appropriate for increased agitation but also feels that a unified movement, cutting across national boundaries, will emphasize Arab internal disharmonies and the inability of the individual Arab states to satisfy popular aspirations.

IRAQ

A new Anglo-Iraqi treaty of alliance may again be in the offing, despite the violence with which the Portsmouth Treaty was rejected in Baghdad last spring. The Iraqi delegate to the UN has reportedly sounded out British Foreign Secretary Bevin on the subject and the British ambassador in Baghdad is currently determining whether Iraq is ready to open negotiations. Although the Iraqi UN delegate murmured vaguely that the military clauses must be revised when asked by Bevin what was wrong with the Portsmouth Treaty, the Iraqi Government itself would probably be satisfied with the original terms. It has the difficult task, however, of avoiding the maladroitness which brought on the Portsmouth Treaty fiasco, of putting through a treaty without appearing subservient to the UK and thus arousing Iraq's fanatical nationalists.

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LEBANON

Effective parliamentary opposition to the government is beginning to take form for the first time since the French mandate ended. A small but aggressive group of eleven deputies, headed by the experienced Maronite leader, Camille Chamoun, is maintaining a steady barrage against Prime Minister Riad Solh on both internal and external issues; this bloc was joined by two other groups, the Phalanges and the National Bloc, in a recent protest boycott of parliamentary by-elections. Although the Solh regime is generally unpopular, Chamoun is handicapped in his efforts to form a strong, united opposition by the divisive effect of the Palestine issue. Needing Moslem support as well as that of the Christian leaders who have already cooperated with him, Chamoun would ordinarily be able to rally substantial members of both groups behind a drive for internal reform. At present, however, he probably cannot win Moslem support without pursuing a strong anti-Israel policy, which would lose for him his present Christian backing.

INDIA-PAKISTAN

The relationship of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon to the British Commonwealth will be one of the topics discussed at the Prime Ministers' Conference now convening in London. Sentiment in India is particularly anti-Commonwealth, and the powerful Congress Party demands that India be called a sovereign republic. At the same time, however, the Congress realizes the benefits to be derived from maintaining close relations with the UK, and it is highly unlikely that India would be willing to withdraw from the Commonwealth and leave Pakistan and Ceylon alone in the subcontinent to reap these benefits. Prime Minister Nehru is therefore probably hoping to ascertain the minimum conditions under which India can still remain in the Commonwealth. Possibly the conferees will explore the feasibility of devising a formula by which the new dominions may eventually be able to become "republics" within the framework of the Commonwealth, although the UK is not expected to encourage the conference to reach any final decisions in such matters.

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NOTED IN BRIEF

Vigorous guerrilla activity continues in all parts of Greece. In the Vitsi area guerrilla strength (6,500-7,000) is the same as in the Grammos operations, and the guerrillas have about a dozen 75 mm guns and four 37 mm AA guns. Reports indicate that satellite aid is increasing and that a guerrilla recruitment campaign is under way to raise the over-all strength of the bandits from 24,000 to 40,000 by 1 December. The Greek Army's apparent inability to cope with the guerrillas and a general lack of confidence in the UN's capacity to seal the borders are intensifying the feeling of insecurity throughout the country. Disturbances in northern Ethiopia appear to have taken place recently although the government has issued a denial. The disorders were in protest against the old land taxes and the newly imposed school taxes. In view of the loose control maintained by the central government over the provinces, such outbreaks must be expected from time to time, especially in areas with large Moslem minorities such as the southeast section of the country, where the Moslem Somalis seek independence from Ethiopia. Inaction in the Iranian Majlis has prompted the Shah to renew his efforts to obtain constitutional reforms, including greater power for himself over legislative processes. Hyderabad, under Indian military rule, is gradually returning to normal although the extremist Razakars are causing minor disorders in the northern and western sections of the state. In Paris the Security Council has given no indication of the final treatment it will give to the Hyderabad case. The Kashmir dispute is causing great concern to the UK, which hopes that the UN Commission will make concrete recommendations instead of merely submitting a negative report. The UK believes that certain areas in the southeast of Kashmir might be ceded to India and certain other areas to Pakistan, with a plebiscite to be held for the rest of the disputed area.

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